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Officers' Stone Quarters of Fort Mackinac,
Mackinac Island, Michigan.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Michigan

Historic American Buildings Survey
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313 Garfield Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

OFFICERS' STONE QUARTERS OF FORT MACKINAC
Mackinac Island, Mackinac County
Michigan

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Owner State of Michigan

Custodian Mackinac State Park Commission

Date of Erection 1781 to 1800

Architect Unknown

Builders British and United States soldiers.

Present Condition Good

Materials of Construction: The exterior walls are of stone, basement and one story in height; roof supported on heavy timbers now covered with modern asbestos shingles colored red and laid about 1909 when the fort underwent extensive alterations.

The stone quarters as originally built were composed of two complete apartments, with living rooms and three bedrooms on the first floor; dining room, kitchen and helps' quarters in the basement. Basement walls are approximately 38" in thickness and first floor approximately 30". During the passing of so many years three fireplaces on the first floor have been closed and the two large kitchen fireplaces in the basement have been bricked up.

In 1929 the building was remodeled, the stairways closed up and openings were cut through the center stone dividing wall for greater convenience, as the basement was converted into a tea-room and the entire first floor into a museum. These openings were cut through with great difficulty as the basement wall was found to be approximately 8'0" in thickness and the first floor 6'0" thick.

Materials of Construction (Continued)

This building, due to its almost continuous occupancy, is very little changed, and in a very good state of preservation. Its three massive stone chimneys and white-painted walls are still preeminent on the bluff that overlooks the Straits of Mackinac.

Other Existing Records:

Rindge Report 1934.

Additional Data:

After the massacre of 1763 at the Old Fort Michilimaackinac on the mainland, it was decided to move the fort and its surrounding buildings, for greater security, to Mackinac Island.

So it was that in 1780, Lieutenant Patrick Sinclair began construction of the new Fort Mackinac on the Island. The year 1781 gives us our earliest record of the construction of the Officers' Stone Quarters.

Work was abandoned at the removal of Gov. Sinclair for excessive expenditure in 1782 and seems not to have been resumed until the Jay Treaty forced England to give up possession of the Island in 1796. When the United States forces under Major Burbeck arrived to occupy the fort, an inventory of buildings was given him from the British commander, in which the Stone Quarters are described as being partly finished, walls as high as second story, sleepers of the second floor and window frames decayed and roof has not been placed.

Fort Mackinac was so highly prized by the United States that the Commander-in-Chief, General Wilkinson, himself, was sent out in the summer of 1797 to make an inspection and report. The result was a building program in the following year and in the Records of the War Department we find a letter to the Secretary of War written in December 1800 that the Fort contains one stone barracks for the use of the officers "equal, if not superior, to any building of the kind in the United States".

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Materials of Construction (Continued)

Previous to the Civil War, the post was intermittently occupied and abandoned until after the Peace of the Appomattox. From then on, a garrison was maintained in the Fort until the final evacuation in 1895, when an Act of Congress, the Fort of Mackinac was added to the park system of the State of Michigan.

The Stone ~~Qu~~arters are a fitting monument to the builder of Fort Mackinac, Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair. Due to its being so well constructed, it still remains to us, the only complete building included in the original British plans for the fortification of Mackinac Island.

J. O. Vanney

District Officer, June 30, 1937.

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